

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for processing media requests from clients in a content distribution system comprising the steps of:
  - preparing media for delivery via said content distribution system and storing
  - 5 delivery information relating to said media comprising at least one of bit rate, bandwidth and media subscription type;
  - analyzing request information transmitted from a client via a request for media, said request information comprising bandwidth and connection capability of said client; and
  - 10 determining from said request information and said delivery information and substantially in real-time if said client can receive the requested said media within selected system constraints.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of denying said
- 15 request if said client cannot receive the requested media within said selected system constraints.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the step of responding to a request via at least one of rewriting original metadata associated with said request, using
- 20 protocol supported responses, and automatically generating metadata associated with said request to perform at least one of denying said client access to the requested media and redirecting said client.
4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said request and a response to said
- 25 request occur within a real-time streaming protocol connection.
5. A method for processing media requests from clients in a content distribution system comprising the steps of:
  - preparing media for delivery via said content distribution system and storing
  - 30 delivery information relating to which clients can access which media;

analyzing request information transmitted from a client via a request for media, said request information comprising client identification; and

determining from said delivery information and said request information and substantially in real-time if said client is authorized to receive the requested media.

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6. A method as claimed in claim 5, further comprising the step of denying said request if said client is not authorized.

7. A method as claimed in claim 6, further comprising the step of responding to a request via at least one of rewriting original metadata associated with said request, using protocol supported responses, and automatically generating metadata associated with said request to perform at least one of denying said client access to the requested media and redirecting said client.

8. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said request and a response to said request occur within a real-time streaming protocol connection.

9. A method for processing media requests from clients in a content distribution system comprising the steps of:

20 preparing media for delivery via said content distribution system and storing delivery information relating to subscriptions to different types of said media;

analyzing request information transmitted from a client via a request for media, said request information comprising client identification; and

25 determining from said delivery information and said request information and substantially in real-time if said client is authorized to receive the requested media.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising the step of prioritizing fulfillment of said request with respect to other requests depending on the type of said subscription associated with at least one of the requested media and said client.

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11. A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising the step of rewriting metadata associated with said request to deny said client access to the requested media.

12. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein said request and a response to said  
5 request occur within a real-time streaming protocol connection.

13. A content distribution system comprising:  
a plurality of servers from which to obtain streaming media;  
an operations center for dynamically determining which of said servers are to  
10 serve which of a plurality of media streams and for redirecting clients to other said  
servers when the corresponding one of said servers does not store a requested media  
stream; and  
a transport module operable to analyze communications between a client and one  
of said servers, which comprise a request for one of said media streams and a response,  
15 substantially in real-time to determine if said client can receive said media stream within  
selected system constraints.

14. A content distribution system as claimed in claim 13, wherein said  
communications occur within a real-time streaming protocol connection.

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15. A content distribution system as claimed in claim 13, wherein said request is  
associated with metadata relating to at least one of client identification, and client  
bandwidth and connection capacity, said transport module being operable to deny client  
access to the requested media stream if said client cannot receive the requested media  
25 stream within selected system constraints.